

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY BERN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION OECD PARIS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 4099

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB,NO,XG

SUBJECT: EUROPEAN EAST-WEST TRADE UNION CONTACTS AND PORTUGAL

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REF: EC BRUSSELS 8380

1. EAST WEST CONTACTS: NORWEGIAN TRADE UNION FEDERATION (LO) PRESIDENT TOR ASPENGREN TOLD AMBASSADOR SEP 23 EAST WEST TRADE UNION RELATIONS ARE GETTING "COLDER AND COLDER" ESPECIALLY AS FAR AS NORWAY CONCERNED. IN RESPONSE TO LETTER FROM COMMITTEE OF FOUR ILO WORKER REPRESENTATIVES ASKING FOR ADVICE ABOUT WHETHER TO PLAN A NEW CONFERENCE LATE IN 1976 OR 1977, NORDIC TRADE UNION COUNCIL(NTUC) MEETING IN STAVANGER A WEEK OR SO AGO DECIDED THAT (A) THEY WERE NOT IN FAVOR OF A CONFERENCE IN NEAR FUTURE; (B) THAT CONFERENCES FOR CONFERENCE'S SAKE WERE UNDESIRABLE; (C) THAT NEXT STEP WOULD BE FOR COMMITTEE TO WRITE TO EACH PARTICIPANT IN FIRST CONFERENCE ASKING FOR A NATIONAL REPORT ON WHAT HAD BEEN DONE TO IMPROVE WORK ENVIRONMENT IN ITS COUNTRY AS RESULT OF CONFERENCE. NTUC REPLIED TO COMMITTEE SUGGESTING IT WRITE SUCH A LETTER AND EVALUATE REPLIES. ASPENGREN SUGGESTED THAT SUBSTANTIVE RESULTS,NOT STATISTICS ON NUMBER OF MEETINGS,WERE NEEDED AND THAT IF REPLIES CAME BACK FUZZY OR NEGATIVE ABOUT WHAT EACH COUNTRY HAD DONE, A COMMITTEE SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED TO TRAVEL AROUND AND EVALUATE EACH NATION'S PROGRESS.

2. ASPENGREN SAID SOVIET AND EAST GERMAN EMBASSIES, WHICH HAD TAKEN INITIATIVE TO MAINTAIN REGULAR CONTACT WITH HIM AT LEAST TWICE A YEAR, HAVE NOT BEEN IN TOUCH WITH HIM SINCE CONFRONTATION OVER PORTUGAL. LO'S INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY KAARE SANDEGREN ADDED THAT LO'S INTERNATIONAL OFFICE HAD RECEIVED NO CONTACTS EITHER. ASPENGREN SAID THAT LO'S STRONG PORTUGAL STAND AND ASPENGREN'S COMMENTS AS TO REASONS FOR SHELEPIN'S DEPARTURE AS SOVIET TRADE UNION CHIEF HAD BOTH APPARENTLY RANKLED SOVIETS. SANDOR GASPAR, HUNGARIAN TRADE UNION CHIEF AND KEY FIGURE IN EASTERN EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CIRCLES ACCORDING TO ASPENGREN,CORNERED ASPENGREN RECENTLY IN VIENNA AND WANTED TO SET HIM RIGHT ON WHY SHELEPIN HAD QUIT. ASPENGREN REPLIED THAT THERE WASN'T TIME(GASPAR'S FLIGHT WAS NEARLY DUE TO LEAVE) AND THAT ASPENGREN WOULD STICK CONFIDENTIAL

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WITH HIS OPINIONS ON SUBJECT OF SHELEPIN. ASPENGREN SAID LO TREASURER EINAR STRAND(A STRONGLY ANTI-COMMUNIST FORMER COMMUNIST) WAS TAKEN TO TASK FOR LO'S PORTUGAL STAND BY ACTING SOVIET TRADE UNION CHAIRMAN DURING HIS JUST COMPLETED VISIT TO USSR HEADING A WORK ENVIRONMENT DELEGATION. SOVIETS COMPLAINED ABOUT LO CALLING IN SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN EMBASSIES TO DELIVER PORTUGAL COMMUNIQUE. ACCORDING TO ASPENGREN, STRAND

REPLIED THAT NORWAY IS A FREE COUNTRY AND NORWEGIANS
"CALL A SPADE A SPADE" THAT FRANKNESS WAS PART OF
FRIENDSHIP, AND THAT PERHAPS CLOSE AND FRIENDLY RELATIONS
WERE NOT WHAT SOVIETS WANTED. SOVIETS BACKED DOWN.

3. PORTUGAL: SANDEGREN EARLIER EXPRESSED CONCERN AT
SOVIET EFFORTS TO ORGANIZE SOLIDARITY COMMITTEES FOR
PORTUGAL TO COUNTER SOCIAL/DEMOCRATIC EFFORTS. HE SAID
SUCH COMMITTEES HAD BEEN FORMED IN OTHER COUNTRIES
AND HE EXPECTED ONE HERE, AS CERTAIN NOISES IN THAT
DIRECTION WERE ALREADY BEING MADE. SANDEGREN HAS BEEN
ENGAGED IN BITTER POLEMICAL EXCHANGE IN PRESS BY A
FEMALE "LO MEMBER", PRESUMABLY COMMUNIST, COMPLAINING
THAT SOCIALIST CURTO WAS INVITED TO ANALYSE TRADE UNION
SITUATION FOR NTUC'S STAVANGER MEETING INSTEAD OF
INTERSINDICAL REPRESENTATIVES. SANDEGREN SAID SOARES'
SECRETARY BERNARDINO GOMES WAS WITH CURTO, WHO GAVE
NTUC USEFUL RUNDOWN ON PORTUGAL, THAT THEY ALSO SAW
LABOR PARTY CHAIRMAN REIULF STEEN AND FOREIGN MINISTER
KNUT FRYDENLUND AND THAT FURTHER PARTY-TO-PARTY COOPERA-
TION IS PLANNED, PARTICULARLY IN FIELDS OF "WORKER
EDUCATION" (I.E. ADULT EDUCATION, LABOR EDUCATION AND
INFORMATION WORK) AND LABOR PRESS, PROBABLY INCLUDING
SEMINARS IN NORWAY FOR PORTUGUESE SOCIALISTS.
SANDEGREN EXPRESSED HOPE GOVERNMENT WOULD DO SOMETHING
SOON TO SUPPORT POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS IN PORTUGAL,
PERHAPS AID TO REFUGEES BACK FROM ANGOLA (GOVERNMENT
PLANS FOR SUCH ASSISTANCE HAVE SINCE BEEN REPORTED IN
PRESS). SANDEGREN SAID HE FELT IT WAS TIME FOR EUROPEAN
GOVERNMENTS TO RESPOND WITH AID AND THAT
ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT WAS GOOD
JUSTIFICATION FOR NEW AID INITIATIVES.

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4. COMMENT. NO FUTURE ALL EUROPEAN TRADE UNION
CONFERENCE SEEMS TO BE IN THE CARDS AS THINGS STAND
NOW, THANKS TO PORTUGAL AND SOVIETS HOSTIL REACTION
TO SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT FOR PORTUGAL'S
SOCIALISTS.
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